

Problem Solution in Cultural Differences Between Sundanese and non Sundanese Couple in Bandung by Using Intercultural Communication

Christina Rochayanti

Department of Communication Studies

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences

University of Pembangunan Nasional “Veteran” Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

Interethnic marriage means legal union of spouse from different ethnic group. It is a form of cultural background differences at interpersonal level (micro). Besides, starting their new marriage life, the couple must also adjust themselves respectively toward different cultural elements. The method of the research is interpretive-qualitative with symbolic interaction approach. Participants of the research were selected from those who have been through the process of cultural adjustment in interethnic marriage. Data was collected by deeply interviewing and observing 13 couples, Sundanese and non-Sundanese that have been married for more than 10 years and have children. Generally, the research shown that Sunda cultural and custom of couples' ethnic identity difference formed a communication interethnic marriage patterns Sundanese and non Sundanese in Bandung. The results of the research were divided into three findings : firstly the communication patterns of interethnic marriage can be classified into; (1) dominant, (2) initiative, (3) combination, (4) adaptive, and (5) creative. Secondly, various pressures in the interethnic marriage life mainly caused by financial support for their extended family, different food appetite, life style and social comments. Thirdly, the interethnic couples can accommodate the differences in treating their children and interacting with their extended family.

Keywords: Intercultural Communication, Interethnic Marriage, Ethnic

Introduction

Interethnic marriage is defined as a legal union of spouse from the different ethnic groups. The differences of these ethnic groups automatically mean the differences of the cultural background. This idea is similar with Frederick Barth's opinion (1969: 10-11) and Dodd (1988: 69) that an ethnic group is known because of the similarity of the characteristic of the culture tradition inheritance. The culture which has been accepted since the beginning of human existence needs the process of accepting each other's differences. Gudykunst and Kim (1992 in Mulyana 1996:164) stated that:

It is the culture which programmed us to define which one is real, genuine, right, and which is not., we are programmed to think, perceive, and behave so that someone whose behaviors are not good or even odd are taken as something inappropriate, irresponsible, or inferior. In this case, we have our own natural likelihood for being ethnocentric as the effect of indistinctive relationship between ourselves and our culture.

Theory of Symbolic Interaction (Mead and Blumer), which is summarized from the concept

of mind, self, and society, assumed that human has the ability to think, hence human can act based on his thought. The Self Theory or self concept is appropriate in shaping ethnical identity in terms of the self-concept is placed in the ethnical context. Mead (in Mulyana, 2000:10) stated that someone had been born in the particular nationality, geographic part, ethnic group, with a certain relationship to his social environment. Therefore his self identity is specifically seen from his culture and ethnic. Ethnical identity in the interethnic marriage is an important problematic thing because there are some differences within each cultural background that can not be merged or parallelized. A married couple has ethnical identity which can be accepted in a cultural society. This is the importance of symbolic interaction between husband and wife, which each comes from different ethnical identity. By understanding the symbols or the obligation of cultural tradition from each ethnic, hopefully the difference can be reduced. Interethnic communication happens when people who involved within the communication process come from their own culture. Tubbs and Moss (1996:236) stated, "When people from difference culture involved in communication, wrong perception in decoding each cultural code is a common thing", while Gudykunts and Kim (1992: 4) explained that the situation happened because "when we communicate with people from other cultures, we often are contorted with languages, rules, and norms different from our own". Something considered as polite, beautiful, and ethical in our culture, might has different meaning in others' culture.

The idea of respecting among individuals or groups is needed to create cooperation in most social organizations. Marriage as the inter-subjective where the couple should be able to understand that marriage can happen because of the involvement from other members of family or relatives. Inter-subjective concept is the main part of Schutz's theory (Mulyana, 2001:3). The husband and wife do not only enter a sequence of their household life but also build a good relationship with other family relatives. The phenomenon of the communication process

within interethnic marriage which connects two different cultural backgrounds as the social reality will be revealed in this research. Interethnic marriage is not only a unity of two individuals but it also unites family relatives which have different cultural background. It means an inter-subjective that married couple does not just think about their own matters but also parents, parents in law, brothers, sisters, and also the couple's relatives. If we apply the phenomenology concept in the interethnic marriage, this difference can be taken specifically from the cultural group such as values, views or interpretation, rules, or the consequences or risks in the society of their culture, if two individuals marry as a husband and wife, later they will realize about those differences.

The previous research of interethnic marriage shows that there will be assimilation in the mixed marriage, a fusion in the society life. The research which was taken by Bambang Winarno (1986) and Mateja Sedmak (2000) with an objective approach, had explained that opinion. In the other hand, a research with a subjective approach, explained that the likelihood of a conflict that happens in the interethnic marriage is not caused by the cultural difference but it is because of the difference of the personal's attitude, a research by M. Budyatna (1994). Other research took place in Bali, a marriage between Bali ethnic (man) and other ethnic (wife), in fact, did not give any effect towards the etiquette of Bali's culture, because the man was so dominant in his culture, this research was done by Sri Saadah and Hartati. Meanwhile, Anak Agung Ayu Dewi Larantika examined the marriage between Bali natives and foreigner. The cultural domination of the husband or wife in the family determines how they will educate and care their children. Based on the previous in the interethnic marriage which automatically has different culture, there will be a conflict between couple, children education, and a possibility of the fusion in their life in the society. Therefore, it is still relevant to examine the problem of interethnic marriage by focusing in the communication pattern as the adaptation process between couple to survive in their marriage. There is no research about the focus of the

communication pattern, so we need to examine further to know how the couple faces the difference and overcomes the different cultural background.

Bandung was chosen as the research area because there are various ethnics live there. It makes an availability of job vacancies, many interesting public facilities, and many immigrants come to permanently stay in Bandung. Seeing that reality, an assumption that there are many interethnic marriages occurs, even though there is no information that shows that reality yet. The purpose of this research is to develop communication science between cultures with people who have different ethnic group background, which are (1) To investigate the process and effective communication pattern between cultures, (2) To investigate the creation pattern in the similar meanings in the interethnic marriage.

Method

This research used qualitative method with symbolic interaction approach. This approach assumed that human experience is caused by the interpretation, (Moleong, 1996:10) and Muhadjir (2000: 183) stated that symbolic interaction ... as one of the qualitative research models based on the phenomenology approach, because indeed that philosophy is also the foundation, or we might say that they have similar methodological approach. The subjects of the research were the interethnic couples of Sundanese and non-Sundanese in Bandung which have been married for 10 years and have children. The subjects were purposely chosen based on their willingness to tell their intercultural experience in their interethnic marriage. The object of this research is the communication process used by the interethnic couples in maintaining their marriage.

The techniques which used to collect data were deep interview and observation. Analysis was written during the observation process, and then categorizing collected data based on the classification of theme and model. The data in this research are qualitative data such as statement, non-verbal action that can be recorded

from the sentence description, so there are three activities that can be done, they are: (1) Data Reduction; (2) Data Presentation; (3) Verification. Member check, after the observer succeeds in the interview then the data are re-written and tried to be clarified based on the research focus. Then observer should re-visit to confirm the result of the research to the informants.

Result and Analysis

There are two characteristics in the interethnic marriage between Sundanese and non-Sundanese in Bandung. Love is the reason for the couple who each comes from different ethnic would like to marry. Another characteristic is that they have to be in one same belief or religion which most Sundanese people also belief, where they live at that time. Interethnic marriage between Sundanese and non-Sundanese in Bandung is not only based on love, but it is sometimes because of the similar belief which also the major belief in the Sundanese society.

Solution for Different Cultural Background

Entering the household life which is built based on the different cultural background will need a lifetime commitment. It includes adaptation and compromise in understanding and accepting cultural difference. However, not all of the differences in the interethnic family can be accepted and accommodated by the interethnic married couple. There are possibilities in certain circumstances those differences will cause pressure, misunderstanding, open conflict, which can make the marriage less harmonious. It is not easy to solve difference problem in the family as the smallest social group in the cultural difference. Cultural difference will become more difficult problem when each individual continuously defends their culture and tries to pass the culture to the next generation without any change in it.

Communication Pattern in the Marriage

Communication in the marriage is different from the communication before marriage. The stereotype that existed before marriage will not make the married couple easily defends their

marriage. The cultural background differences bring many different behaviors, such as the difference in appetite, behavior to the family, both to the real parents or the parents in law. Interethnic marriage communication is classified into five patterns, through different accommodation process in defending the marriage.

Dominant Communication Pattern

In the dominant communication pattern, there is a cultural likeness from the husband to dominate the life of the family. The cultural elements are religion, food, language, and husband's social interactions. The husband's cultural element such religion only happened in one married couple. The wife who comes from Manado was previously a Catholic.

"I follow my husband religion because I want it myself; I think it will be better if there is only one religion in a family."

The wife's willingness to follow her husband's religion because of the awareness of her thought that the family will be better if there is only one religion, so that their children will be easier to understand the idea of religion. The wife does not want her children live between two different religions. She wants a unity of religion message, which is Islam in the family, so she agrees to follow her husband's religion without any force but by her own awareness in order to create a family in one religion. The husband communicates religious message from Islam that was embraced by the majority of Sundanese ethnic and her non Sundanese wife (Manado) can accept it. The religious communication is not blocked by the wife's family (her parents). The wife shows accepting behavior here, it happens also with her family.

The problem of the culture of food appetite, all the couples follow the husband's appetite. The wives try to adjust themselves with the husband's appetite who is a Sundanese. At first, the wives dislike particular food from Sunda, but as the time goes by, they can like it. For example the appetite in eating *jengkol* or *petai*, they used to reject it, but now it becomes their favorite food.

The husband as a Sundanese tries to communicate a culture element which is food. He has begun to introduce this cultural element since the marriage began. Their life is far from the land of Sunda, and it makes him missed his traditional food. Therefore he started to inform the cultural element to his wife, although she initially rejected it.

Another cultural element that can be fully accepted by the wife is the Sundanese language. These three husbands in this pattern tried to teach Sundanese language to their wife when they still lived outside Java or after they lived in Bandung. As the Dayaknese wife said, "Since we moved to Bandung, I tried to learn Sundanese language to communicate with my husband or the neighbors". The wife's ability in speaking Sundanese shows that she is ready to enter her husband's cultural society which she had never known before.

The domination of this husband's cultural element is because of the reality integration in one family, which is similar with Berger and Kellner said (1970, in Poloma, 1994:314) that reality construction of the smallest group which consists of two people, which is marriage.

The wife accepts and follows the husband's cultural element because the willingness of the couple to adapt each other and create the same understanding in the marriage. The wife's action in following her husband's appetite, which accomplished by eating and cooking Sundanese traditional food. Sundanese language is as the communication tools with the husband and his relatives, when there is a kind of family gathering, for example *arisan* or other events of celebration. The wife's action as the Schutz's social "actor" which is active and trying to create her own world, while the 'because motive' context is shown by the wife's conscious action as the comers and the marriage is her own choice. Beside the "because motive", it is also "aimed motive" to maintain the unity on her family.

Intercultural communication in this pattern has strengthened the husband's culture

or Sundanese culture. It is an accommodation of wife's communication in the husband's culture. At first, the wife used to be *divergent* to one of the husband's cultural element, food for instance, when they still lived outside of the Sunda region. But, since they had lived in the husband's cultural region, the wife knew how to handle the problem and then she started to be *convergent* or accept the husband's cultural elements. By accepting the cultural elements, this married couple maintains the Sundanese culture to defend their marriage.

Dominant Communication Pattern happened because of a certain ethnic group places a less important status of a daughter in the family. Wife's status as the youngest child, a new comer in the husband's cultural region, the marriage is her own choice and also living in the husband's cultural region, the wife can fully follow her husband's culture; it means that her marriage is dominated by the husband's culture.

Initiative Communication Pattern

In this pattern, there are four married couples that can be categorized in this group. Here, the term initiative occurs because there are differences in the behavior which is not in the same direction between husband and wife, and it disturbs the harmoniousness of the marriage, so it has to be solved. To overcome the problem, one of the couple informs an initiative such as idea, concept, or real action which is agreed by both sides so that there will be no misunderstanding and they can cooperate in creating similar meaning. They do those efforts to maintain their interethnic marriage.

In the case of managing their household finance which is experienced by the two married couples (2) and (3), as told by the wife (2):

There will be a lot of problems if we married with someone who ethnically different, one of them is in the problem of financial management. Since we were married, my husband always kept all the money that he earned from his work, and me, as his wife, I can just ask for what I need. At first, it was not a problem for me, but until my husband just got money from his parents for educational cost, and

he did not tell me. I am his wife, it would be better if everything can be discussed with me. When my father was alive, he said to my husband, "The way you hold your money is not usual in Sundanese Culture, most Sundanese husbands give the money to their wife then let her manages all the household needs, not like the way you are doing now." After that, the way in managing money changed, by giving the money to me, but not for long, and then he came back to the old way.

This data comes from the wife, but the husband also knows it, because they are in the same place and time. The wife's complaint about her husband's behavior in managing household financial is because of the husband's way which is not common in the Sundanese Culture. The wife wants to be treated like a wife in the Sundanese culture who is trusted in using the money from his husband to fulfill all the daily needs of the family. It happened because of the different point of view between husband and wife who comes from different ethnic, and the husband also admitted it. In the same time admitted that there are cultural differences in their marriage, just like the husband said:

I realize there are different customs. I choose to do that way because my parents and people in my place do the same way. Until now, my mother never complains with my father's way in managing family financial. About the money that my parents sent me to pay my college, I think that money is only for college and I'd better not tell my wife about it, it doesn't mean that I want to cover it, but I believe that we shouldn't use the money for education for family needs, that is all its purpose.

The meaning of the husband's opinion that his behavior is not a problem in his culture because his parents also do the same. In the other hand, the wife expects him to be open in managing the family financial after the marriage. The money source and usage has to be discussed together. While the couple (2) also experiences

the same condition but in a different form, as told by the wife:

My husband's closure appears when he gives some funds as a help to his relatives and he never tells me anything about it. It doesn't mean that I don't want to give the help also, but he has to respect me as his wife. Moreover, his colleagues in his office who often tell me if his brother came to his office, his brother will ask some money. I tried to deny it; I just thought that they are brothers, so it's normal if they meet each other. I tried to think positively.

This data comes from the wife, while the husband does not want to express that his behavior in helping other relatives is not accepted by his wife. It might be based on his culture which used to close himself from other cultures, he implies that the wife who has to adjust herself to the condition.

I hope that my wife can adjust herself to the culture in this society. It will be the same if I visit Bali. My wife should learn and understand by herself and I don't need to teach her. I am a person who close my self from other cultures, include Javanese and Balinese cultures.

From the husband's explanation, we can conclude that the wife as a comer should attempt to accept and understand, and also to adjust or adapt, she also has to understand her husband's behavior in helping his relatives.

The wife respond the differences in custom and behavior by having initiative to open herself to her husband. The husband's behavior can not be changed, so the wife must do something, like something that the wife from couple (3) did:

To overcome the continual conflict, I have the initiative to tell my husband that he can hold all the money and I only ask for the culinary needs. All the other costs which cover electricity, children, and charity are handled by my husband. I proposed this method so that I won't be confused, because in every occasion when there is a demand from society to give a charity, I can not give them anything because I don't

have the money. My husband seems distrusting me either.

While the wife from couple (2) also has initiative to be open to his husband and his entire relative.

To response my husband's behavior, I tried to open myself by always trying to discuss with my husband in helping the financial of his relatives. I try to communicate with my husband when his relatives asking money to me, and I always ask them to wait for the answer after I discuss with my husband. I did this so that my husband will be more open and his relatives also understand that the decision to help is the result of our discussion. I can see that my husband doesn't really like talking about family matter or even anything, he only stays silent, it means that he disagrees. Because of that, I am the only one who has to be more open by communicating all matters, though sometimes he doesn't response at all.

The wife's initiative means that the husband's behavior is not always acceptable. The husband should be able to respect his wife. In marriage, the couple has to share togetherness, understand each others' cultural difference, and not being selfish, as told by the wife of the couple (2).

However, this marriage should be maintained, that why I can not be selfish. Marriage is only once in a lifetime for me. I have a principle that other people don't need to understand me, but it is me who must try to understand them.

The meaning of the wife's initiative is to make similar interpretation to create togetherness. What the wife did is the accommodation consequence, which the wife tried to understand the husband's want based on the interaction. Communication is defined by Tubbs and Moss as "a creation process of a meaning between two persons or more" for the sake of togetherness. While Face and Faules (1998:26) said, "...when someone involves in the communication, we find that there are two common actions happen; message creation and

message interpretation". This idea was applied by the wife to overcome the different behavior.

Berger and Kellner (1970 in Poloma, 1994:314) explained that marriage is an intimate small group. The marriage will let the individual to internalize himself/herself in the marriage reality and try to make a world where they can feel comfortable. The wife did her initiative to be comfortable in the social environment that she had created. The initiative that was done by the wife is the effort to solve the problem of different behavior and also to maintain the marriage.

Husband's behavior which did not involve his wife in his own family events happened when the wife, as the daughter in law, thought that she was not invited to her husband's family events. How the husband's relatives behaved to the wife is not accepted by the different ethnic wife, as told by the wife from couple (8).

One day, my friend told me that one of my husband's nephews just married, and I don't know about it at all. How can this happen? At that time, I asked my husband, he said that it didn't involve "other" people. As a daughter in law, I am still considered as someone else or "other". I was still able to ask if this is how Minangkabau families treat their daughter in law. I tried to find out and get some time to talk with psychologist. I have my initiative to involve myself by telling my husband if there is another family event, I will come to represent my husband. In every family event, I always come to represent my husband and I told them that my husband was not finished his work today, and I came here as a kind of replacement. In every my husband's family event, it was me who always came, by doing it, I could enter to my husband's relatives society. I also tried to be closer to my mother in law who is respected by their children.

This explanation is not obtained by the observer from the husband. The wife tries to response the behavior of her husband's relative by involving herself and cooperating with her husband. Here, the wife realized that her husband's relatives consider that daughter in law is not included to

the family members. In the other hand, Sundanese culture considers that daughter in law is a part of the big family, so she is always invited in every family event. The wife tried to solve this difference by approaching a person, who is respected by her children, her mother in law. The mother figure in the Minangkabau culture is a person who is respected by her children. This effort had succeeded in changing his husband's relatives' behavior toward the daughter in law, so that the husband will always involve his wife so that she will be always invited in the family gathering. The wife's effort is the form of consciousness that the behavior of her husband and his relatives can not be accepted by someone from other ethnic.

Intercultural communication in this pattern grows cooperation to overcome the problem of cultural difference. Communication accommodation in the interethnic marriage is started because of the complaint or rejection/ divergent toward the behavior which is different from one member of the couple, then telling the initiative in the form of concept, idea, or real action, so it grows the behavior which can maintain the marriage.

The initiative communication pattern happened because of their different behavior. It was because of the husband's view toward a certain cultural aspect can not be accepted by the wife who has different ethnic from him. The have initiative to explain the idea or concept, which is agreed by both side to solve the main problem.

Combination Communication Pattern

In this pattern, the interethnic couple tried to combine the cultural elements in the marriage life. The cultural elements such as the marriage tradition, the ceremony to celebrate seven month of wife's pregnancy, wide relatives association (*arisan*, visiting at *Lebaran*), and combined certain cultural values to educate their children. There are two couples (1) and (12) which are classified in this pattern. Both couples use both marriage traditions in their wedding party, as being told by the wife from couple (12),

When we were married, we used both tradition and we held them separately in

two towns. In Bandung we used Sundanese tradition; we also used the *Degung* instrument. After that we and our family departed to Palembang to hold the reception by using Palembang tradition.

That decision is also taken by the couple (2) who held the marriage in Garut, the marriage process used two tradition, as being told by the wife.

At the marriage ceremony we were using Sundanese costumes, then at the reception/ the wedding party we were using Aceh costumes and it was followed with *pengajian* which lead by the wife's mother. My entire family did not fully follow the Acehnese tradition because it would need too much money and energy, while not all my families in Aceh who live in Aceh came to the wedding party. The purpose is to make everything more practical, the important thing is that we can present a tradition in the party. My mother as the example, she was willing to be in my side and following the *pengajian* as the Acehnese tradition, even my parents had been divorced.

These both couples attempted to present each cultural tradition to hold the marriage process. We can see that the usage of the marriage tradition, besides informing to the society that the person is not single anymore, but also to introduce the culture characteristics. And, it happened because of the behavior of accepting other cultural traditions from each family or relative.

Another element that was used as the combination element is the seven month ceremony. From thirteen couples which observed, only two couples who did this tradition, as being told by the husband of the couple (12).

Basically, I like tradition. Since I arrived in Bandung, I've tried to learn Sundanese tradition. I often come to the traditional marriage ceremony. The seven month ceremony, though I don't know the meaning, because it uses Sundanese language, but I still understand the sequences. That is my reason when the

marriage was held by using Sundanese tradition, I just felt happy, it was the same when my wife got pregnant. I also enjoyed doing any tradition.

The message that can be seen from the non-Sundanese husband's opinion is that following the tradition for the sake of the unborn child is not a problem. The consciousness to accept the rules of the tradition occurs because of the tolerant behavior to understand each other, as long as the behavior has good purpose. This solution is also applied by the non Sundanese wife from the couple (1), she doesn't mind to follow her husband's tradition.

The other combination is also applied in educating their children. Interethnic couple tries to obtain the good cultural elements when educating their children, as being told by the husband from the couple (12).

I think that acculturation is very good for the marriage life which has different culture. It is the same also in educating my child; I also try to combine good cultural values to be passed to the children, even to all my relatives or my wife. I introduced about how people from Sumatra who are strong in fighting for their life and I use Sundanese culture which takes politeness as the primary spirit. At least this method can avoid the Sundanese's perception that always believes that people from Sumatra are rough. This learning is also explained when we gather with my wife's family. Because my wife is the oldest child in her family, I was taken as the elder in my wife's big family. Beside that, I also take my family to visit Palembang, so my wife and children can feel and live with Palembang people, and I have ever permitted my children to stay in Palembang by themselves without his parent, I want them to understand how the real life and character of Sumatra people. This experience, at least, can avoid the stereotype toward non Javanese people. The children can judge and explain how the characteristics of non Javanese people are.

The wife also attempted to take good cultural element in educating her child.

For me, as a Sundanese, I try to teach the ethics in the social association. I have an opinion about it, if someone has known the ethics, so wherever he lives, the ethics will always give benefits.

We can see the message from their explanation and efforts, so that the interethnic couple will produce children who understand well the culture of their parents and they can use the culture as their knowledge in living among other people. While the couple (1), tries to teach the custom of the people in the wife's cultural region.

I tried to gives an early religious education as what parents in Aceh do to their child. I do this so that the child can understand religion well; therefore I enlist my oldest child in a *pengajian* in the nearest Mosque after he finishes school. Beside that, I also dress my children with Acehnese traditional costumes. I deliberately ordered them from Aceh to be used when there is a Carnival in the school.

Acehnese wife tries to teach her cultural values when educating her children. This situation gives the husband-wife a chance to introduce the cultural elements to the children.

This combination pattern is a little different with the Tseng's study (1977 in Gudykunst and Kim, 1992:211), in which interethnic marriage, there is a combination of the cultural elements, including religion, as being explained by Tseng:

While such a mixing is most obvious in concrete matters (e.g. home furnishings, eating patterns, religious behavior), it may also involve concepts and ideas

In this research, there are indeed combinations of cultural element, such as marriage tradition, seven month ceremonial, food, children education, and how to associate with other relatives. But in religion, there is no combination happened because both members of the couple have been already in the same religion, it also happened in the house arrangement, they do not quite concern with it.

The combination communication pattern in the interethnic marriage happened because there

is husband and wife's willingness to combine the cultural elements which is seen as a good value for the couple and the children. Each of them introduces the cultural elements to their children, as being told by the husband of the couple (12):

As a non Javanese person, I tried to teach the behavior about how to fight and survive in our live to the children.

Meanwhile, the wife explained that:

As a Sundanese, I tried to teach ethics to the children

While the wife of the couple (1) gives her own reason:

As an Acehnese, I teach an early religious education to the children.

From the explanation above, we can take the message that the interethnic husband and wife are different in seeing the cultural elements which are taken as a good value to be transformed to the children for their knowledge in the future. They also introduce the culture of food by serving two menus or one by one everyday.

The motivation of this couple is to combine the cultural elements in the marriage to avoid the ethnical stereotyping, as being told by the husband of the couple (12) that:

The introduction of parents' cultural elements to their children, at least, will avoid the ethnical stereotype of non Javanese people, that non Javanese people are seen as a rough people by Sundanese ethnic. I let my children directly know the Palembang people, I even told them to stay in Palembang without me and their mother. Every *Lebaran* we always visit Palembang, my wife will learn the food menu and my children can be understand the people there directly. The aim of my action is to socialize the cultural values which are different from their parents.

The intercultural communication in this pattern produces the acculturation of the culture and accommodation process of the communication by accepting each other's different background. The acceptance has happened since the marriage until their household life, including the education process of their children. The marriage life is filled by teaching

the good cultural elements to educate their children, introducing various traditional foods, and visiting the parents where one of the couple comes from.

The combination communication pattern happened because of the willingness of the non-Sundanese to avoid the ethnical stereotype of the non-Javanese people by the people who live in their surroundings in Sunda region, therefore they introduce the good cultural elements in educating their children; hopefully it can give a positive judgment to the non Javanese people.

Adaptive Communication Pattern

In this pattern, there are three couples (4, 9, and 10) in this category. The characteristic of these couple is that the husband has important position in his culture, with this position the husband has to obey the tradition and involve his wife in doing his role. But, because these couples live in their wife's cultural region, so the husband should also respect the wife's culture. The wife's cultural element which is accommodated by three husbands is the marriage tradition, they held their marriage in Sundanese tradition. One of these husbands follows the appetite of the wife, as being told by the husband of the couple (9):

Although I'm a Padangnese, I have to reduce Padang food, because I have too much cholesterol, and I do like to eat Sundanese food with its *lalapan* (raw vegetables). I think Sundanese food is healthier.

From the husband's explanation, following his wife's appetite is considered as healthier than his own traditional food from his culture. By using health reason, the husband agrees to change his appetite which is different from his traditional food. The problem of food appetite is not easily anticipated. The husbands from the couple (4) and (10) can not eat the Sundanese food, as being told by the husband from the couple (4).

If I eat Sundanese food everyday, I will be weaker because lack of energy, while I have to work which needs extra power. If my wife cooks Sundanese food, I will prefer to eat in a Padang Restaurant which similar with my appetite.

It is not easy for the husband to change his appetite, for that reason the wife have to eat in the husband's culture, the wife follows her husband's appetite, and fortunately the children like the food too, as being done by the wife from the couple (4).

Everyday, I cook traditional Batak Karo food, fortunately my children loves it very much. If I want to cook Sundanese food, I will cook it and it's only me who will eat it. I learn how to cook Batak Karo food from my husband's aunt who had ever stayed in our house. While she lived here, I used the opportunity to learn Batak Karo food, and now I can cook food which is appropriate with my husband's appetite. It makes my husband used to eat in the house, so we can save some money.

The adaptation of this couple is to make a balance, that each side has applied the cultural elements accommodation. The Bataknese husband agrees to follow his wife's religion, though he does not change his appetite, because if he eats Sundanese food, it will weaken him.

The wife also has a consequence because she was married to a husband who has important role in his culture; she also has special duty because of her husband's status in his culture. The Nias husband who is also a leader in the cultural society, so the wife will also has a special role. A Bataknese man who will marry a non Bataknese woman, has to do a ritual ceremony to include her as one of the Bataknese tribe's member. It also happens to other rituals which have to be joined by the husband and wife. Minangkabau husband as the Ninik Mamak involves his wife to also educate her husband's niece and nephew.

Those three wives sincerely accept their duty and role in their husband's tradition. They follow any cultural demand from their husband's culture. As the explanation from the wife from the couple (10), as the wife from a custom leader:

I follow anything which becomes my husband's cultural demand, because my husband status as a leader. It gives me more activities together with other relatives, even my parents in law often stay with us.

The explanation means that she accepts any cultural demands because of the husband's status as the custom leader. With this status, the husband involves himself in many events with his big family and relatives. This involvement is communicated to the wife, so she can follow and try to do her role as the leader's wife. One of her roles that she has to do is to give advice to her husband's sister who will marry to a Nias man.

As the custom leader's wife, I have a special duty to advise my sister in law who will marry a Nias man. As the leader's wife, I have the first chance. When I was giving the advice to her, she cried as this is the time for the separation and we will never meet again, and I think why she behaved in that way. Then I asked to my mother in law, she told me that in the Nias culture, if a girl marries a Nias man, since the marriage, she is not permitted to visit his parents and family and she fully becomes the member of her husband family. So I understand that this tradition which made her very sad because it was the last time she met her parents and relatives. If she wants to visit her relatives and family, she is only permitted to visit without spending any night there, and the visit is only permitted after some months of the marriage or after she gets her pregnancy. In fact, the traditional rule is not applied to me who comes from outside Nias. They did not apply the rules to me because I still often visits and spends few nights in my parent's house.

The wife's explanation shows that her advice should be heard by the younger sister in law because she has the position of the older sister in law. Here, we can see a grateful expression that the husband's family and relatives can think wisely by not applying the tradition to the wife. It means that they still respect wife's culture. The wife is involved in the husband's culture because she is considered to be able of creating a good example, about how to become a good wife for the Nias man.

Interethnic couple in this pattern tries to understand each other's cultural elements. The

husband applied the wife's cultural tradition in their marriage process, religion, food, and then the wife also follows her husband's cultural tradition. The wife takes part in her husband's ritual tradition because the husband has important position in his culture.

Intercultural communication in this pattern pushes the interethnic couple to fulfill the cultural demands, from both cultural demands of the couple. The accommodation process was started by being *convergent* (accepting) to the cultural elements. The husband accepts the wife's cultural element (marriage process and religion) and the wife accepts the role in her husband's cultural tradition. They attempt to fulfill the cultural demands by doing real and sincere behavior.

The real behavior to fulfill the cultural demand from other couple's culture is confessed by the husband from the couple (10):

Although my wife comes from Sunda, she agrees to learn Nias culture.

While the husband of the couple (4) said:

I admit that my wife can deal with my hard behavior and she is willing to understand my cultural demands. If she had been not able to deal with my hard behavior, this marriage would have been ended long time ago.

There is a confession about the husband's characteristic which is different from his cultural tradition, as being told by the wife from the couple (9):

My husband, though he comes from outside Java, his attitude and behavior is so gentle, it is just like a Sundanese.

This confession is considered as a form of positive judgment to the companion's behavior. Interethnic couple admits that there are efforts to accept each other and make a real action to accept each other in order to fulfill cultural demands.

The adaptive communication pattern happened, because the husband has important position in his culture. The effort in fulfilling the cultural demands involves the special role of the wife and also their living area in the wife's cultural region, so this couple tries to fulfill both cultural demands.

Creative Communication Pattern

This communication pattern differs from other couples; only one couple (6) which applies this communication pattern. They are Sundanese male and Javanese female, and this kind of marriage is still considered as a taboo thing by the Sundanese people in the region where the couple lives. This couple has received many verbal messages from friends, colleagues, or family, since they were married until now. They can be in the form of comments, which doubt that the marriage can survive. There are cynical comments toward the man's decision to marry a Javanese woman. The verbal messages or comments which came at the time when the couple was approaching their marriage came from the husband's relatives. He said that:

My relatives said, "You are a Sundanese, so don't marry any Javanese girl, because it will be the same like marrying your own mother, you should be allowed to do that after the seventh generation." But I answered with a joke that I am the 8th generation so I'm allowed to marry her anyway.

The verbal message from the husband's relatives implies that there is an to the Sundanese husband's decision to marry Javanese woman. This anxiety occurs because there is still a stereotype in the Sundanese society that this kind of marriage will never survive or go well. The form of this worry is because of the prophecy which is completed by the Sundanese man, as being told by Mulyana (2000:222):

.. so that you believe to the stereotype that Javanese woman will take over all yourself? It is possible that you will represent the perception in front of your Javanese wife. You'll be seem like less confident; you will stand infirmly and powerless; you voice will sound soft and expressing politeness, you face will look down and you don't have any courage to look in her eyes. Seeing your behavior, your wife will probably consider you as a weak man, then she will talk to you, "What the hell are you doing? You act like a powerless man." Then you will answer in your heart, "Is it true that

she wants to take over my self?"

From this expression, it is clear that the marriage between Sundanese man and Javanese woman will not last, and it is worried that the husband will be powerless in facing his wife. This is the reason why the marriage can not be accepted by the Sundanese, people where the couple lives.

The verbal message sounds like a critic to the husband's works from his Javanese wife, below is one example:

One said, "Your dance looks like Javanese, it is not a Sundanese." I often keep my disappointment in my heart, and I always try to be calm. In opposite, this condition makes me learn the Javanese culture deeper than before.

The comment would have not been stated if the Sundanese man had not married a Javanese woman. We can see a kind of anxiety here, that the Sundanese man will be more Javanese after he lives with the Javanese woman. We can see how anxious the husband's friends and relatives with his decision to marry a Javanese woman. These comments are not addressed only to the husband, but also the wife. The wife confessed that she also received many words, which she cannot understand the meaning until now.

One said, "If Javanese man marries Sundanese woman, his life will be rich. But if the Sundanese man marries a Javanese woman, his life will be only enough." I don't understand the meaning of that idiom. I just try to live in a proper way and I often tell my friends to leave their anxiety about my marriage and explain that we are just like the players who act in stage, and they will be the audience, they can stay to see, they don't need to give any comment at all.

Those words mean that marriage of Sundanese man and Javanese woman will not be good in the future. The point is that they have to be able to prove that those words are not for them. That is the reason why they try not to be influenced, but they still accept them and live properly, as being told by the husband.

I realize the risk of the decision to marry Javanese woman and live in Sunda where the people here still consider this marriage as a taboo thing.

It is called as a creative, because this couple tries to accept and be calm without being influenced, they answer the pressure by living properly, as being explained by the husband.

I attempt to be natural and normal, don't be trapped, the most important thing is my relation with my wife, we both and also our family are not disturbed by those comments.

The husband also gives advice to her wife to be careful with her friendship in the office. The wife has her opinion why her husband gives the advice, "I'm often deceived by their behavior, they behave nice in front of my face, but they mock me in my back. Indeed, I have to be really careful" These comments which are addressed to this couple are the risk that they have to take in facing the reality of people from the region where this couple lives.

The husband tries to give good life to the Sundanese people by always maintaining his relation and not being trapped. The husband's decision to live normal and proper has subjective meaning, which means a motivation to maintain his marriage, and then he can prove that the marriage between Sundanese man and Javanese woman is not a problem and it is normal. The couple of Sundanese husband and Javanese wife is in line with the study by Battina Rojas (2000:3) towards the interracial marriage in USA which shows that this model of marriage often receives pressure from the society.

The word 'couple' in the interracial marriage has three meanings in the society. The word covers family, friend, acquaintance or other people. This study shows that this couple often receives continual pressures from the society, and it can disturb the actualization in the social life.

The pressure in Bettina's study consists of (1) Verbal Pressure – comments from people which in the form of mocking, (2) non Verbal – Cynical stares, (3) Consider that the couple is a

cultural traitor. In fact, this study is not quite similar with the couple of Sundanese husband and Javanese wife, because this couple only receives verbal comments from the husband's cultural society which only questioning his decision.

The problem of this pattern is how the couple can combine two realities in his household life. As Berger and Kellner (in Polloma, 1994:314) suggested Social reality construction theory in the marriage, "Marriage doesn't only relate to a new step toward a new role, but it is more than that, it is a step to a new world."

The interethnic couple of Sundanese husband and Javanese wife enters a new world which is marriage world which tabooed by the Sundanese people. This couple has to receive many kinds of comments or verbal messages. Marriage is not only the new world that this couple will face, but also the society where they live which also has the husband's culture. The husband realizes this condition, and he faces those comments by living normally and properly. The comment addressed to the husband is more often than to his wife. It is because the husband is the part of the culture which has the marriage stereotype. Many Sundanese say that marrying a Javanese woman is just the same like marrying their own mother. The position of the woman (Javanese) is considered as older than the Sundanese man. The marriage between Sundanese man and Javanese woman does not only integrate two individuals but also encounter the society (friend, acquaintance, and family).

Creative communication pattern in the interethnic marriage is the effort of the couple to face the comments from the surroundings. These comments are stated because of the stereotype for this kind of marriage. This stereotype is still believed by many Sundanese in the region where this couple lives. A kind of marriage that will receive comment in the beginning of it and also when the couple try to maintain it. The couple creatively attempts to behave as usual, normal, and proper. They do not demonstratively try to show the stereotype is wrong. We can see the wife's statement, she said, "That's enough, you can just keep silent. We both are just the players, playing on the stage and you can watch. You don't

need to comment anything". This statement is addressed to the society so they can just see how the life flows in their marriage.

Despite to ensure friends, acquaintance, or family, it also explains that this kind of marriage doesn't need to be worried. This is the effort from the couple to maintain their marriage, but they still can live in the society who doesn't really support them. The question is why does this couple keep staying in the society who considers that their marriage is taboo?

The husband who comes from Sunda actually has his previous experience that can weaken the stereotype of Javanese woman. Since his childhood, he had had interpersonal relationship with Javanese people because his house was used as a boarding house where the Javanese college students who had their education in Bandung stayed. When he had his school, he admitted that many of his teachers were Javanese, and they were pleased in learning Sundanese culture. When entering university, he studied in the Java region, and she met with the woman who later becomes his wife.

The experience of Sundanese husband which weakens the stereotype of someone who comes from other ethnic strengthens the opinion from Samovar and Porter. This stereotype is not carried from the birth, but it can be examined. Moreover, the weakening of the stereotype which is because of the interpersonal relationship in his childhood also strengthens their opinion that the stereotype occurs because there is no interpersonal contact or relation with Javanese people in their life since their childhood. Based on his experience and the weakening of the stereotype, the Sundanese man finally rejects the taboo of the marriage between Sundanese man and Javanese woman and he dares to live in the society who still believes that stereotype.

Intercultural communication before the marriage has weakened the stereotype and the Sundanese man ignores the stereotype, he even decides to do the marriage. When entering the marriage, they do not just integrate two individuals, but also all the family and they have to face the society (friends and acquaintance). They face different problem than other couples,

because others don't encounter with the society. This is the only interethnic couple who affects the social system of the society. For this couple, their both families are not a problem in this marriage. It means that this couple has succeeded in their cooperation by accommodating each cultural demand.

In encountering the comments and verbal messages from their closest people, the creativity of this couple pushes the husband as the individual, who receives the comments,

Those comments have been my risk because my courage to marry Javanese woman

Intercultural communication in the creative pattern has not weakened the stereotype of this marriage, because the Sundanese still believes the stereotype. To maintain the marriage, they can only receive the risk and just live as usual and normal. The accommodation process of communication is done by receiving the reality and answering it in normal and usual way.

The interethnic marriage which is tabooed by the culture of one member of the couple where the couple lives will receive verbal messages from the surroundings. They struggle not only against their both families, but also wide society who doesn't support their marriage.

Creative communication pattern happened by the form of the marriage which is tabooed by many Sundanese where the couple lives, receiving verbal messages from the society in the surroundings. This couple tries to take the risk and live normally.

Conclusion

Interethnic marriage required the couple to realize the cultural differences. The cultural differences are different interpretation, values, and behavior or customs. Tseng said that problems which encountered by the interethnic couple is because the doer is not prepared to accept the cultural differences. This idea is also admitted by the interethnic couple of Sundanese and non-Sundanese that they didn't know their couple well when they were married. The existence of the cultural differences was realized after they lived together in their marriage life. The commitment

to maintain the marriage requires consciousness to accept differences and understand each other's culture by putting interpretation in the same degree between husband and wife in their marriage life process which has different cultural background.

Adaptation and understanding toward differences needs a process because human can not spontaneously receive the differences. Individuals in the interethnic marriage is a social actor, he has to realize that the family which he builds has two different cultural backgrounds, in order to make similar interpretation, so they can understand and solve the problem of differences. The similar interpretation can be achieved in the marriage because of the intensive and exclusive husband-wife relationship between them.

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